

# I

At that time I lived in a residential school, 200 km away from home. That wasn't a co-ed school. There were huge maidans, hostels, mess, a small power house, a doctor's clinic and much more. Students from class IV to XIIth, teachers, security personnel, electricians all lived there. There was a very good arrangement for living, eating, drinking, reading and playing. Inside the big boundary was a different world.

I had enrolled there in seventh grade. That was my first hostel and there were unknown people from different districts so, I used to be lonely and sad. My love for literature has been there since that time. Yes, but it was difficult to understand English. We had three English teachers in class VIIth –Vishnu sir, Mainak sir, and Pranat sir. All three were scholars and explained the most difficult text simply. I didn't have much interest in any other subject except literature. I loved it. Whenever there was a literature class, I would listen to the teacher with great concentration, understand and study diligently.

Vishnu sir was a bit tough-tempered teacher. He taught grammar. Whenever it was his class, All the children would sit upright and erect on their benches and a strange stillness used to prevail. Every student used to pray that Sir should not ask him questions, because, if he is not able to answer, he would be slapped hard on his face. Mainak sir was kind and friendly, if a child is failing with some marks, he would pass him by giving marks but only when the boy had tried to solve not blank sheets, Whenever a child is missing home, sir used to give him his phone

and made him talk to parents. But he used to get angry when a child deliberately made a mistake.

Pranat sir was a 40 year old jovial and funny person. He was virtuous. He used to teach any chapter in such a way that no child could forget it. He used to give real life examples to explain a difficult paragraph, used to make fun of an angry teacher, told his childhood stories, taught students friendly and used to laugh and joke a lot. Rarely I have seen him shout at a student.

In our school mess, the food was prepared like every normal mess. Watery-thin lentils, oil accumulated on the vegetables, better not to mention others. The breakfast and lunch of the teachers were free in the mess but some teachers used to go back just after seeing the food in the mess and they had food in their residence. Some somehow used to taste it some times but pranat sir used to sit in between us and had both his meals. Some teachers were disgusted to see him eat and some were envious of his fame.

When we had a school holiday, we used to get homework in every subject. Models in biology, writing about rivers in geography, reading about a king in history, etc. But Pranat sir gave different homework every time which was fun to do. Sometimes he said to watch an English movie, to read a comic or a book, sometimes he said to write a story. I used to do Pranat sir's homework first. When he checked the copies, it seemed as he was just ticking but no mistakes were hidden from him. Whenever he caught a mistake, he would mark it with his red pen and also wrote the correct answer.

That year passed happily. And we all came in eighth grade. I started writing from the seventh grade, but after coming to the eighth grade, I started writing stories often. I tried writing in English language and let my friends read. There were a lot of grammatical mistakes in my writing and my friends used to make fun of my stories. I was happy when I heard that the same three teachers would teach us this year also. It was my favourite subject and my favorite teachers were going to teach them. The method of teaching of those three was very different from the rest of the teachers, especially Pranat sir's method of teaching was very much liked by every student. It was the month of April. This time also, Pranat sir started teaching with the same warm and friendly style. Every student was very happy to have him back as their teacher. No student missed his class, everyone listened carefully and whenever Pranat sir caught a funny tone, the whole class laughed loud.

I wrote a lot of short stories over the holidays that I just let my friends read. I used to make mistakes and they used to make fun of me. I had joined an English coaching during the holidays but it did not help much. I felt bad but I used to correct the mistakes they pointed out. Once a friend said that

'why don't you show your story to a literature teacher?'

I liked this advice and kept wondering why it didn't come to mind earlier. I was determined that I would show a teacher what happened and know my mistakes and correct them. The first face that came to my mind was Pranat Sir.

One day when the class was over, I showed a story to Sir and told the whole thing. He sat down on a bench outside the class and began to read my story

comfortably, I stood next to him looking at his face. He marked some places with his pen and when he read it completely, he told

"there are some grammatically mistakes to be improved but well written." and advised me to read books. Now whenever I wrote a new story, I showed him and he used to read it and correct the mistakes and every time he used to teach something new. Slowly my writing started improving. Now Whenever my friends read my story, they did not made fun of me and were surprised to see the rapid improvement in writing. I was happy to have Pranat sir as my mentor.

### III

The month of July came, we had our exams and classes were held. It was the third period of the school. Pranat sir was teaching us 'glimpses of the past'. All the children were listening attentively when a school office employee came to the door of the class and said to Pranat Sir, "Sir! You are being called to office." There was no curiosity on Sir's face as if he knew why he is being called. Sir said that he would come soon and he left. The class time was over but he did not came. I kept thinking about his absence. In the next class the science teacher came and started the lesson but I was not in the class. My eyes were looking at that black board, but my mind was thinking about Pranat sir that what would have happened. When that class was also over, I came out and I saw Sir coming out of his cabin. His cabin was 2 class rooms ahead of mine. Sir was in a hurry, so he could not be talked to, but when I asked the boy standing outside his cabin, I came to know that he had resigned. Hearing this news, I was shocked. Then

on asking again I came to know that he had done this because of the family-problems. What made him different from all the teachers was his interesting teaching style. Pranat sir will not teach us and he is leaving this thing made me sad again in a way that it seemed as I had came 1 year back in time. I felt lonely again. I felt like I was going to lose someone very own. I didn't feel like doing anything, whenever I tried writing something I felt wordless.

July 2 was the day I last saw him. I did not know when sir was leaving, so I thought of writing a letter to him. Keeping phones were not allowed in our school. On 6th of July, I wrote a letter to Sir and wrote down all my feelings about how he helped me and doubled my love for literature. If I had asked someone else to give that letter to him, he would have read it, so I decided to go and give the letter to sir myself. Our school was very large in area and students were not allowed in the area where the teachers lived. A security guard used to stay there all the time and did not allow any student to enter. But I was determined that I have to give it to Sir. Twice I asked the security guard to go inside but he scolded me and drove me away. I gave up hope of giving the letter to sir. but the same evening when the boys were playing I went to see the guard that maybe he Don't be there and I get a chance to go. Coincidentally, the guard was not there. I took the letter in my pocket and ran fast to the teacher's block. But, there were a lot of houses there and I didn't knew about Sir's residence. When I found a science teacher there, I asked him. He looked at me suspiciously asked "what's the matter?"

"Actually I have to ask some questions!" I said then he showed me the house and told "he live on the first foor" I ran fast upstairs I found his house and I knocked nervously on the door.

He opened the door with his head and came out. I asked him nervously

"Sir! Do you recognize me?"

Sir shook his head and said that "Oh yes!, you write stories,you improved a lot. Have you brought something to show?"

"No sir! I had to ask something..You are leaving? I asked without any expression on my face.

"Yes son! We are Leaving on eighth, there is some problem with some land in the house."

I saw his wife stuffing the bag and it made me more sad.I took out the letter from my pocket and said

"sir, I had to give something to you" and gave it to him and I came back after touching the feet of Sir and his wife.

while I was on my way to my hostel I hardly controlled my tears.when I reached,everyone was playing outside.Noone was there. I started crying bitterly. At that time just the image of Pranat sir was coming to mind.

On the evening of July 8, I went to the same security guard and asked "did pranat sir left?" The guard nodded yes and I went back to the field sadly. After a few days when the new teacher came and this time there was no more thrill and fun.